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It has already done good work in raising the standard of political discussion, and social and literary criticism. It deals with public questions with entire independence and masculine common-sense. There is now no better political writing than is found in its columns, — writing which gives evidence of rare mental discipline and fairness, and special training in political science, and is the expression of strong convictions deliberately formed, and maintained with dignity and moderation. The contrast which the Nation thus affords to the common run of newspapers is very striking. Its opinions on the matters which it treats carry weight with readers capable of appreciating sound argument and well-matured opinion. It has already acquired an influence of which it may be proud, and yet it has but just entered on its career.

17. — *The Correlation and Conservation of Gravitation and Heat, and some of the Effects of these Forces on the Solar System.* By ETHAN S. CHAPIN. Springfield, Mass.: Lewis J. Powers and Brother. 1867. 12mo. pp. 120.

IF we were to compare Mr. Chapin's powers of mathematical and speculative insight with those of eminent modern physicists, it would be greatly to his disparagement. We think, nevertheless, that he reasons on physics much better than Aristotle, and has much clearer ideas on many scientific subjects. But if Aristotle had had the advantages, in early life, of a training in the maturest results of modern science, prior to the development in his own mind of speculative opinions grounded on his own unaided observations and reflections, — if, in other words, he had had a truly educational discipline in science, — he would doubtless have excelled our author. How it would have been had he acquired a knowledge of modern science later in life, and after his opinions were in great measure formed, it would be more difficult to decide. How far later instruction can supply the deficiencies of early education is indicated, however, in certain historical examples, to which our author refers in his Preface. Newton, at the time of his death, "had not above twenty followers out of England"; and Kepler said of his immortal work, "It may well wait a century for a reader, as God has waited six thousand years for an interpreter of his works." The author adds, "Therefore, when I not only introduce new theories, but combat the errors of accepted ones, I may expect to wait long for an impartial reader." It will be seen that our author here compares himself to these eminent philosophers. But to our mind he much more nearly resembles the majority of their contemporaries. The self-

made man of our day is, with reference to the more abstruse matters of science, in the position of the instructed man of former times, whose maturity was contemporary with great discoveries in science, and with whom later instruction could not efface the prepossessions of an earlier education. To set out in the study of nature with the guidance of the results already reached has the supreme advantage of avoiding that greatest obstacle in the path of learning, the necessity of retracing our steps, and remodelling our fundamental ideas. If our author had had this advantage, we are sure, from the original mental power which his book discloses, that the book would not have been written, or else would have been made much more worthy of attention from students in science.

18. — *Reply to Hon. Charles G. Loring, upon Reconstruction.* By JOHN S. WRIGHT of Illinois. Boston: A. Williams & Co. 8vo. pp. 189.

IT is impossible to speak at length of Mr. Wright's work, for not only is the pamphlet before us but a small part of his contemplated work, but it is not the opening part thereof. It is "No. II." of his "Political Tracts," publications likely to do good in promoting the dissemination of useful knowledge, but which are *not* likely to have much effect on the settlement of the reconstruction question, as that, judging from present appearances, will be disposed of before half the series shall have been printed and put in circulation. Nor do we think there is much to regret in this. The reconstruction question is of a thoroughly practical character, and is fast settling itself under the guidance of Congress, as prepared and set forth in what is known as the Military Reconstruction Act. With the return of the excluded States all discussion of the general question must cease, considered as a practical matter; and in that case, to write on it or to read works on it would be labor and study of no value, and would rank with those ingenious discussions and inquiries that show how the battle of Waterloo might have been won by the French, had they not lost it. We live rapidly in these times, and books that concern questions of pressing moment soon lose their interest, as action supersedes discussion. To such books Mr. Wright's pamphlets belong; and though they have a certain attraction now, they must soon be classed with other works that treat of the best manner of settling matters that have an obstinate way of settling themselves, in utter disregard of the arguments of ingenious speculators.